

<b>Proposal Title</b>	Building policy and analytical capacity for the 2015 parliamentary election
<b>Reserve Fund</b>	Asia Reserve Funds
<b>Collaborating Programs</b>	Burma Project
<b>Recommended by</b>	Goran Buldioski ( <a href="#">Think Tank Fund</a> ) (TTF) and Maureen Aung-Thwin (Asia Office / Burma Project)
<b>Coordinated by</b>	Vlad Galushko (Think Tank Fund)
<b>Approver</b>	<p>Binaifer Nowrojee (Asia)</p> <p>This project will be a valuable addition on three fronts:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. In the short-term, contribute to greater public discourse and participation in advance of the elections which will be critical in forwarding Myanmar's democratization process.</li> <li>2. Begin to diversify and build the policy think tank field in Myanmar which is currently dominated by one organization -- Myanmar Development Resource Institute (MDRI) (heavily supported by OSF, but also seen to be too close to the government by many). The seed funding to several other policy efforts will hopefully allow the emergence of new actors which can then be taken up by the Burma Project in the long term.</li> <li>3. The Think Tank Fund has been asked by George Soros to help MDRI sort out its organizational development problems. This project will allow the Think Tank Fund staff to travel and provide technical assistance to both MDRI and the other emerging efforts.</li> </ol> <p>I recommend this project.</p>
<b>Amount Requested</b>	\$550,000
<b>Unforeseen Need (250 words)</b>	Myanmar will hold a national parliamentary election at the end of 2015, which will be pivotal as its outcome may stall or ensure the country's movement toward openness and liberalization. Both the ruling party and the opposition (led by Aung San Suu Kyi) will field candidates. At the same time, electoral democracy in societies transitioning from authoritarian regimes can fuel marginalization of the weakest. Through recent engagement with local stakeholders, TTF notes a need to improve policy literacy of civic actors and broaden the space for evidence-based debate. By engaging in these activities, OSF can contribute to the democratic conduct of the upcoming elections

	<p>without directly engaging in election-related activities. OSF could also position itself as an unconventional donor that works on the depth of democratic change rather than merely helping a host government meet technical requirements for a fair election.</p> <p>This grant is an opportunity to help shape the future development of the country (from economy to higher education) as NGOs and policy research organizations could fill in an important void and influence the pre-electoral agenda. At the moment, Myanmar has only one think tank and very few organizations ready to undertake this challenge. That is why OSF should experiment by providing three to four organizations with funding to develop policy research capacity. After years of military rule, Burma has no independent public polling capacity. This also provides OSF with an opening to help build up this field as well as to further ground public debate in evidence.</p>
<b>Activities Proposed (500 words)</b>	<p>In order to achieve these objectives, we propose three sets of activities:</p> <p>1) <b>Policy literacy trainings</b> would engage about 100 key Burmese civic activists (40-50 NGOs) in a series of workshops on the basics of policy analysis. The workshops will focus on policy process and key stakeholders, policy alternatives and evaluation, role of civic and nongovernment stakeholders, etc. The goal is to tie major campaign issues to the broader policies candidates seek to change, and to apply a more rigorous framework to evaluating candidate and party positions. To ensure that international expertise is matched with local relevance and applicability, four Burmese trainers and two international experts will conduct the workshops. Media training will be provided in order to enhance their policy advocacy. Estimated budget: \$75,000-100,000.</p> <p>2) <b>Policy grants</b> to three-four most promising organizations would put their knowledge to practice by enabling them to analyze policy debates during the election campaign and contribute to the public discourse. The grants will also include a mentoring/twinning component to ensure that participants are able to learn from their peers. Potential grantees include the Myanmar Alliance for Transparency and Accountability (transparency of extractive industries), Renaissance Institute (economic policy), Pyidaungsu Institute, Salween Institute for Public Policy (minorities), and Burma Partnership (human rights policy). The outcome of these grants would be two-fold: a) a civil society that participates in the campaign as an informed and critically thinking actor; and b) a pool of NGOs with potential to develop their policy experiences into a separate line of work. TTF believes it can spearhead this effort based on our experiences of working with advocacy groups elsewhere in the world. Estimated budget: \$250,000-300,000.</p> <p>3) <b>Pre-election polling and evidence-based debate</b> go hand in hand as the former enables policy stakeholders to gauge how popular their positions are among the electorate. Building on its successful experience of improving the public polling field in Georgia, TTF will</p>

	engage the World Association for Public Opinion Research (WAPOR) and along with key experts will produce a report and train local groups (e.g. Renaissance Institute) on public polling basics and polling analysis. Estimated budget: \$125,000. The OSF staff-related budget (\$50,000) covers travel related expenses, preparation, and coordination of activities.
<b>Statement of who within OSF would lead the work</b>	TTF and Burma Project
<b>Contributions expected from various units within OSF and essential partners or grantees (250 words)</b>	<p>OSF Burma Project's Rangoon office will manage both the grant making and the operations component of the reserve fund project. Burma Project's program manager, who reports to Burma Project's country director, will be responsible for overseeing the distribution and monitoring of the funds.</p> <p>The director of OSF Burma Project, Maureen Aung-Thwin, and her New York-based program staff will facilitate the processing of grants coming out of this initiative.</p> <p>TTF will provide mentorship, technical assistance, and help identify and work with potential partners. Each quarter, Burma Project will report to OSF Asia's Regional Director, Binaifer Nowrojee, with updates and status reports.</p>